

# **Symposium on "Taiwan, Cross-Strait Relations & an Evolving World "**

Remarks by

Chiu Tai-san

Minister, Mainland Affairs Council, ROC.

September 7, 2022

Vice President Anna Saito Carson of Center for a New American Security (CNAS), President Lai of Prospect Foundation, Distinguished Scholars and Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning. The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) is pleased to entrust the Prospect Foundation to organize today's event, and we are grateful for the efforts of our local co-host CNAS that have made today's symposium possible. I deeply regret not being able to address you in person due to some urgent matters in Taiwan, but I want you to know that it is truly an honor of mine to be able to speak with all of you today.

Today we are witnessing a long-term trend of change and unease, internationally and in the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to share some thoughts and talk a bit about the cross-Strait policy position of the ROC government.

## **1. Beijing has become a destabilizing factor in the Taiwan Strait amid global upheavals**

Over the past two years, COVID, US-China relations, the Russian-Ukrainian war, and the global trade situation have caused upheavals. These manifold and synergized impacts not only have disrupted global economic development and supply chains, but also have sharply heightened concerns and unease among countries on traditional and non-traditional security issues. They are also affecting patterns that are already changing in the Asia-Pacific region.

In early August, amid the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, the authorities of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) abruptly launched a series of targeted military exercises and implemented economic laws to pressure Taiwan. It shifted policy based on assessment of the situation, changing the original regional order and status quo of the Taiwan Strait. This

is not just about the CCP realizing its Taiwan policy or historical mission: Beijing's strategic intention is to use the full spectrum of China's ascendant strengths to dominate the direction of the international order through coercion at a time of change. It also wants to accelerate the reversal of restrictions imposed on it under the existing order. It is also increasingly likely to extend this to the East China Sea, South China Sea, and the entire Indo-Pacific to create an irreversible trend and stir regional instability. This is a very serious warning.

## **2. The essence of cross-Strait relations is peace and equality: sovereign democracy cannot be violated**

Cross-Strait relations are the key to building security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Over the past 70 years, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have lived under different systems and shifted their relationship from military confrontation to exchange and interaction. Now, once again, the CCP threatens to resolve differences by force. Taiwan has faced up to the CCP regime, Beijing has long refused to face the fact of the ROC's existence and the democracy and free will of Taiwan's 23 million people. Herein lies the crux of the problem that has prevented resolution of the cross-Strait political impasse. This is also the essential problem in cross-Strait relations.

The CCP hopes to fast-track reunification. However, it has floundered in the face of the facts, international law, and the principle of peace in international relations through its inappropriate behavior and speech on the Taiwan Strait over the years. First, it misquotes the UN Charter with its distorted "one-China principle" and deliberately misinterprets UNGA Resolution 2758 to claim sovereignty over Taiwan. In fact, Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu have never been governed by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Second, China refuses to renounce the use of force and is trying to resolve cross-Strait issues through a "civil war." This violates the principle of maintaining peace and prohibiting the use of force under the UN Charter. Taiwan, by comparison, lifted martial law and stopped treating the CCP as a rebel group in 1991. Third, China's military exercises near Taiwan encroach on our sovereignty, undermine regional security, and seriously affect international aviation, shipping and trade. They violate the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, coastal peace and order, and the rights of coastal states. The CCP is not only expanding military actions in the Taiwan Strait, but also contravening the tacit security understanding of the "median

line of the Taiwan Strait" set by the US and observed by both sides of the Taiwan Strait for over half a century. This gravely threatens the security interests of all parties concerned. The international community should no longer ignore the CCP's constant challenge to and undermining of the international order and rules.

### **3. Taiwan will not act provocatively or rashly and will jointly safeguard peace across the Taiwan Strait with the international community**

Security across the Taiwan Strait is conducive to peace and prosperity in East Asia. The ROC government has always been committed to maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. In the six-plus years since taking office, President Tsai has firmly upheld the principle of handling cross-Strait relations pragmatically, maintaining rational restraint without provocation, and standing firm without backing down. We will not escalate military confrontation, not harm the rights and interests of any country or people, and not destabilize the regional situation. However, we do not accept any so-called political strategy or institutional arrangement that "resolves Taiwan and violates sovereignty." Taiwan continues strengthening its self-defense, contributing its technology advantages, and also promoting the normal operation of international trade and secure supply chains—these all demonstrate the indomitable tenacity of Taiwan, an "island of resilience."

We thank the US and democratic countries around the world for their support for Taiwan through their sustained attention to peace and justice in the Taiwan Strait. In line with the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances, and with firm Congressional support, the US government has helped Taiwan build up national defense capabilities, initiated bilateral trade negotiations, and deepened investment cooperation. We hope that the international community will realize that mainland China is amassing considerable energy to counter the international power structure and steadily encroaching on, infiltrating, and changing the autonomous operation of democracies through ideological and cognitive warfare. Today, we count on all countries to unite more strongly in urging China to show rational restraint and adjust its practices; we also need to prevent improper and illegal coercion from being "normalized" as a result of our neglect or compromise. Only then can we ensure peace and prosperity in the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific region.

#### **4. Cross-Strait political differences should be peacefully resolved**

The CCP is intentionally fanning regional tensions, with negative repercussions. I would like to make a few comments in hopes of easing the current situation in the Taiwan Strait:

- (1) An old proverb goes: "Strength with arrogance convinces no one." We call on the leadership in Beijing to deal with differences with an open and reform-oriented attitude. It cannot use cross-Strait peace and regional stability as bargaining chips to achieve modern governance or become a responsible power worthy of emulation.
- (2) "People-centrism" should be the main concern in managing and controlling risks across the Taiwan Strait. The CCP cannot even talk about a "shared mindset" if it is unable to stop its harmful pressuring of Taiwan or exercise restraint on the internal negative factors depleting peace in the Taiwan Strait.
- (3) We urge Beijing to communicate pragmatically to reduce misunderstanding and misjudgment between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and prevent the situation in the Taiwan Strait from descending into an uncontrollable crisis. This foundation should be rooted in equality and dignity, facing each other without preconditions, and with consideration to the "shared responsibility" of safeguarding people's well-being and peace across the Taiwan Strait.
- (4) All sides have an interest in the security of the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan has a strategic importance based on its democratic systems and values. This is the basis of our sustainable existence. It is also the responsible conduct that can stabilize the currently complex and changing situation. A vibrant, resilient and democratic Taiwan is a strategic asset. As the situation develops, Taiwan will, as always, actively participate and contribute its strengths in international affairs and regional governance. We look forward to the US and the international community strengthening exchanges and interactions with Taiwan bilaterally and multilaterally so as to make Taiwan better-connected, better-informed, and better-positioned.

Thank you for listening! I wish the symposium a complete success.